IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD

CRIMINAL APPEAL No. 867 of 1991

For Approval and Signature:

HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE KS JHAVERI

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1 Whether Reporters of Local Papers may be allowed to see the judgment ?

2 To be referred to the Reporter or not ?

3 Whether their Lordships wish to see the fair copy of the judgment ?

4 Whether this case involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the constitution of India, 1950 or any order made thereunder ?

5 Whether it is to be circulated to the civil judge ?

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STATE OF GUJARAT - Appellant(s)
Versus
SHANKERLAL KHIMJI THAKKAR & 3 - Opponent(s)

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Appearance :
PUBLIC PROSECUTOR for Appellant(s) : 1,
NOTICE NOT RECD BACK for Opponent(s) : 1 - 3, 3.2.1,3.2.2
NOTICE SERVED for Opponent(s) : 1 - 3, 3.2.1,3.2.2
NOTICE SERVED BY DS for Opponent(s) : 4,
NOTICE UNSERVED for Opponent(s) : 4,
MR SV RAJU for Opponent(s) : 4,

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CORAM : HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE KS JHAVERI

Date : 25/10/2007

ORAL JUDGMENT

1.0 This appeal is directed against the judgment and order dated 26.04.1991 passed by the learned Chief Judicial Magistrate, First Class, Bhuj – Kutch in Criminal Case No. 5657 of 1987

whereby, the respondents – accused persons were acquitted of the charges levelled against them.

2.0 The brief facts of the prosecution case are as under;

2.1 On 27.02.1986, at around 1645 hrs., an inspection was carried out at the shop of the respondents by the Officers of the appellant – State. After completing necessary formalities, a sample of Groundnut Oil was purchased from the respondents in the presence of '*panchas'* and after making necessary payment towards the same. The said sample was then sent to the Public Analyst for examination.

2.2 On examination, the sample was found to be adulterated. Therefore, a complaint with respect to the aforesaid offence was filed against the respondents and, ultimately, trial was conducted. In order to prove the guilt against the respondents, the prosecution has examined three witnesses namely, the complainant – Mukesh Amrutlal Saraiya as PW – 1 at Exhibit – 37, Rafael Paul Chritian as PW – 2 at Exhibit – 51 and Jakhubhai Bhimjibhai as PW – 3 at Exhibit – 78 and has also relied upon several documentary evidence. At the end of trial, the learned Magistrate acquitted the respondent of the charges levelled against him.

3.0 Heard learned counsel for the respective parties and perused the entire documents on record. The principles which would govern and regulate the hearing of appeal by this Court

against an order of acquittal passed by the trial Court have been very succinctly explained by the Apex Court in a catena of decisions. This Court has the power to re-consider the whole issue involved in the appeal, re-appraise the evidence and come to its own conclusion and findings in place of the findings recorded by the trial Court, if the said findings are against the weight of the evidence on record or, in other words, perverse.

4.0 In a recent decision of the Apex Court in the case of ***State of Goa v. Sanjay Thakran & anr. reported in (2007) 3 S.C.C. 755***, the Court has reiterated the powers of this Court in such cases. In Para-16 of the said decision, the Court has observed as under ;

> "16. From the aforesaid decisions, it is apparent that while exercising the powers in appeal against the order of acquittal the Court of appeal would not ordinarily interfere with the order of acquittal unless the approach of the lower Court is vitiated by some manifest illegality and the conclusion arrived at would not be arrived at by any reasonable person and, therefore, the decision is to be characterized as perverse. Merely because two views are possible, the Court of appeal would not take the view which would upset the judgment delivered by the Court below. However, the appellate Court has a power to review the evidence if it is of the view that the conclusion arrived at by the Court below is perverse and the Court has committed a manifest error of law and ignored the material evidence on record. A duty is cast upon the appellate Court, in such circumstances, to re-appreciate the evidence to arrive to a just decision on the basis of material placed on record to find out whether any of the accused is connected with the

commission of the crime he is charged with".

[*Emphasis supplied*]

5.0 Similar principle has been reiterated by the Hon'ble Apex Court in two recent decisions in the cases of ***State of Uttar Pradesh v. Ram Veer Singh & ors.*** reported in ***2007 A.I.R. S.C.W. 5553*** and in ***Girja Prasad (Dead) by L.Rs. v. State of M.P.*** reported in ***2007 A.I.R. S.C.W. 5589***. Thus, the powers which this Court may exercise against an order of acquittal are well settled.

6.0 In the impugned order, the trial Court has recorded a finding of fact that the Local Health Authority has not followed the necessary procedure as provided u/s. 20 of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 while granting sanction for filing of the impugned complaint in question. Accordingly, the entire prosecution against the respondents was held to be illegal and bad in the eyes of law. Considering the facts of the case and the evidence available on record, I am of the opinion that the trial Court was completely justified in acquitting the respondents of the charges levelled against them. In my view, the findings recorded by the trial Court are absolutely just and proper and in recording the said findings, no illegality or infirmity has been committed by it. I am in complete agreement with the findings, ultimate conclusion and the resultant order of acquittal recorded by the trial Court and, hence, find no reasons to interfere with the same.

7.0 I am not discussing the evidence of each witness/s in detail in view of the observations made by the Apex Court in the case of ***State of Karnataka Vs. Hemareddy*** reported in ***A.I.R. 1981 S.C. 1417*** wherein it is held as under:

> "... This court has observed in Girija Nandini Devi V. Bigendra Nandini Chaudhary (1967)1 SCR 93: (AIR 1967 SC 1124) that it is not the duty of the appellate court when it agrees with the view of the trial court on the evidence to repeat the narration of the evidence or to reiterate the reasons given by the trial court. Expression of general agreement with the reasons given by the Court, the decision of which is under appeal, will ordinarily suffice."

8.0 In the result, the appeal is dismissed. Office is directed to send the Records & Proceedings of the case, if lying with this Court, to the trial Court concerned forthwith.

[K. S. Jhaveri, J.]

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